

917.8752

Ev 27

THE LIBRARY
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PROVO, UTAH

A. Dean and Jean M. Larsen
Yellowstone Park Collection



F 722.61 .E93 1923

BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY



3 1197 22757 5823

THIRTY-SEVEN
DAYS OF VENUE



Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2013

THIRTY-SEVEN DAYS OF PERIL

A narrative of the early
days of the Yellowstone

by

TRUMAN C. EVERTS



SAN FRANCISCO

1 9 2 3

THIRTY-SEVEN DAYS OF PERIL

COPYRIGHT, 1923, BY E. & R. GRABHORN & JAMES McDONALD

A HISTORY OF THE
WAR IN THE PACIFIC

BY
E. & R. GRABHORN



NEW YORK
1923

PREFACE

The following pages may possibly require a few words of explanation by way of a preface.

Up until the year of 1870, the country now comprised in the Yellowstone National Park was but little known. It is true that several white men had penetrated that region, one as early as 1809, and had returned to the settlements with glowing accounts of the springs and geysers of that wonderland. Foremost among them was Jim Bridger, the famous guide and Indian scout, but, as he was notoriously averse to telling the truth, or at least prone to vast exaggeration, scarcely anyone would believe him. Even as late as 1869, when a party of three men, Messrs. David E. Folsom, C. W. Cook, and William Peterson, entered the geyser region, so astounded were they at the marvels they beheld, that "they were, on their return, unwilling to risk their reputations for veracity by the full recital of them to a small company whom their friends had assembled to hear an account of their explorations."

The expedition of 1870, was of a mixed character, for, while principally made up of, and financed by, private citizens, it had an escort of troops as a protection from Indian attacks, thus, in a way, giving it gov-

ernment sanction. It's object was either to prove or refute the existence of natural phenomena, as even the members of the expedition themselves were sceptical of their reality. So much interest had been aroused in this mystic region that some of the leading citizens of the Territory of Montana were members and organizers of this expedition. It was under the leadership of General Henry D. Washburn, Surveyor-General of the Territory, and Mr. Truman C. Everts, the author of the following narrative was a member, and it is his harrowing experiences when lost in the wilds of the Yellowstone region, that are related in "Thirty-seven Days of Peril."

The personnel of the expedition comprised, besides the gentlemen from various parts of Montana, the escort, two packers and two colored cooks. In all they numbered nineteen. They were thoroughly equipped and had with them thirty-five horses and mules and rations for thirty days.

They left Helena on August 17th, and proceeded to Fort Ellis, where they were joined by Lieut. Gustavus C. Doane and the escort comprising a sergeant and four troopers. Leaving the Fort on the 22nd, they entered what is now the territory of the Park on the 26th. Following the Yellowstone River by Tower Falls and the

Canyon, they reached Yellowstone Lake on September 3rd. On the 7th the party forded the Upper Yellowstone and made their way through the all but impassable jungle of deadfall south of the lake. It was at this part of the journey, that on September 9th, Mr. Everts became separated from his companions and his terrible experiences commenced.

Quoting from General Hiram M. Chittenden's excellent book "The Yellowstone National Park;" "No more terrible feeling can come over one than that of being lost in a wild and rough country or in a dense forest when there is any real danger of not finding one's way out. It is nothing, of course, to an experienced woodsman, with his rifle, provisions, and blanket, if he does lose his bearings now and then and get badly mixed up. A little patience and careful search will put him on the right track again. But when one who is unused to the wilderness becomes separated from his companions, and perhaps without weapons, food, blankets, or means of making a fire, is forced for the first time in his life to stay out over night in the dense woods or the rough hills, the terror is unlike anything else that can come to one.

'The Yellowstone Park is an easy place for the 'tenderfoot' to get lost in, if he wanders a little way from the beaten path. It is nearly all rough and mountain-

ous and covered with pine forests. In many places these forests are so filled with dead and down timber that it is almost impossible to get through with a horse. They are so dense that one easily gets mixed about directions, for the trees all look alike and it is impossible to see outside to mountains or other landmarks. If the sun is shining one can guess his direction pretty well by the tree shadows, and a good woodsman can tell from certain marks on the trees. But a green hand at the business is almost certain to become confused and to wander around and around without making any progress.

“With this preliminary the reader will more easily understand the terrible predicament in which Mr. Everts found himself when he lost connection with his party; but fully to appreciate his peril it is necessary to bear in mind that he was largely deprived of the most essential resource in such a situation, his eyesight. He was very nearsighted and had to rely strictly upon his glasses, and these appear to have been lost early in his wanderings. Add to this handicap the fact that he was unused to wilderness travel and it is not surprising that even his great physical power and heroic determination came near proving insufficient for his salvation.”

Quoting further from Nathaniel P. Langford's "Dis-

covery of the Yellowstone National Park:” “Mr. Everts died at Hyattsville, Md., on the 16th day of February, 1901, at the age of eighty-five, survived by his daughter, Elizabeth Everts Verrill, and a young widow, and also a son nine years old, born when Everts was seventy-six years of age,—a living monument to bear testimony to that physical vigor and vitality which carried him through the ‘Thirty-seven Days of Peril.’ ”

Mr. Everts wrote the following story as a sequel to the journal of the expedition, which was written by Mr. Nathaniel P. Langford, and first published in Scribner’s Magazine for May and June, 1871. It is to these articles that he refers in the commencement of his narrative.

James McDonald.

San Francisco. 1923.



✧ THIRTY-SEVEN DAYS OF PERIL ✧

I have read with great satisfaction the excellent descriptive articles on the wonders of the Upper Yellowstone. Having myself been one of the party who participated in many of the pleasures, and suffered all the perils of that expedition, I can not only bear testimony to the fidelity of the narrative, but probably add some experiences which will not detract from the general interest it has excited.

A desire to visit this remarkable region, of which, during several years' residence in Montana, I had often heard the most marvelous accounts, led me

to unite with the expedition. The general character of the stupendous scenery of the Rocky Mountains prepared my mind for giving credit to all the strange stories told of the Yellowstone, and I felt quite as certain of the existence of the physical phenomena of that country, on the morning that our company started from Helena, as when I afterwards beheld it. I engaged in the enterprise with enthusiasm, feeling that all the hardships and exposures of a month's horseback travel through an unexplored region would be more than compensated by the grandeur and novelty of the natural objects with which it was crowded. Of course, the idea of being lost in it, without any of the ordinary means of subsistence, and of wandering for days and weeks, in a famishing condition, alone, in an unfrequented wilderness, formed no part of my contemplation. I had dwelt too long amid the mountains not to know that such a thought, had it occurred, would have been instantly rejected as improbable; nevertheless, "man proposes and God disposes," a truism which found a new and ample illustration in my wanderings through the Upper Yellowstone region.

My friend Langford has so well described the

scenery and physical eccentricities of the country, that I should feel that any attempt to amplify it would be to

“Gild refined gold and paint the lily.”

My narrative must, therefore, be strictly personal.

On the day that I found myself separated from the company, and for several days previous, our course had been impeded by the dense growth of the pine forest, and occasional large tracts of fallen timber, frequently rendering our progress almost impossible. Whenever we came to one of these immense windfalls, each man engaged in the pursuit of a passage through it, and it was while thus employed, and with the idea that I had found one, that I strayed out of sight and hearing of my comrades. We had a toilsome day. It was quite late in the afternoon. As separations like this had frequently occurred, it gave me no alarm, and I rode on, fully confident of soon rejoining the company, or of finding their camp. I came up with the pack-horse, which Mr. Langford afterwards recovered, and tried to drive him along, but failing to do so, and my eyesight being defective, I spurred forward, intending to return with assistance from the party.

This incident tended to accelerate my speed. I rode on in the direction which I supposed had been taken, until darkness overtook me in the dense forest. This was disagreeable enough, but caused me no alarm. I had no doubt of being with the party at breakfast the next morning. I selected a spot for comfortable repose, picketed my horse, built a fire, and went to sleep.

The next morning I rose at early dawn, saddled and mounted my horse, and took my course in the supposed direction of the camp. Our ride of the previous day had been up a peninsula jutting into the lake, for the shore of which I started, with the expectation of finding my friends camped on the beach. The forest was quite dark, and the trees so thick, that it was only by a slow process that I could get through them at all. In searching for the trail I became somewhat confused. The falling foliage of the pines had obliterated every trace of travel. I was obliged frequently to dismount, and examine the ground for the faintest indications. Coming to an opening, from which I could see several vistas, I dismounted for the purpose of selecting one leading in the direction I had chosen, and leaving my horse unhitched, as had always been my custom,

walked a few rods into the forest. While surveying the ground my horse took fright, and I turned around in time to see him disappearing at full speed among the trees. That was the last I ever saw of him. It was yet quite dark. My blankets, gun, pistols, fishing tackle, matches—everything, except the clothing on my person, a couple of knives, and a small opera-glass were attached to the saddle.

I did not yet realize the possibility of a permanent separation from the company. Instead of following up the pursuit of their camp, I engaged in an effort to recover my horse. Half a day's search convinced me of its impracticability. I wrote and posted in an open space several notices, which, if my friends should chance to see, would inform them of my condition and the route I had taken, and then struck out into the forest in the supposed direction of their camp. As the day wore on without any discovery, alarm took the place of anxiety at the prospect of another night alone in the wilderness, and this time without food or fire. But even this dismal foreboding was cheered by the hope that I should soon rejoin my companions, who would laugh at my adventure, and incorporate it as a thrilling episode into the journal of our trip.

The bright side of a misfortune, as I found by experience, even under the worst possible circumstances, always presents some features of encouragement. When I began to realize that my condition was one of actual peril, I banished from my mind all fear of an unfavorable result. Seating myself on a log, I recalled every foot of the way I had traveled since the separation from my friends, and the most probable opinion I could form of their whereabouts was, that they had, by a course but little different from mine, passed by the spot where I had posted the notices, learned of my disaster, and were waiting for me to rejoin them there, or searching for me in that vicinity. A night must be spent amid the prostrate trunks before my return could be accomplished. At no time during my period of exile did I experience so much mental suffering from the cravings of hunger as when, exhausted with this long day of fruitless search, I resigned myself to a couch of pine foliage in the pitchy darkness of a thicket of small trees. Naturally timid in the night, I fully realized the exposure of my condition. I peered upward through the darkness, but all was blackness and gloom. The wind sighed mournfully through the pines. The forest seemed

alive with the screeching of night birds, the angry barking of coyotes, and the prolonged, dismal howl of the gray wolf. These sounds, familiar by their constant occurrence throughout the journey, were now full of terror, and drove slumber from my eye-lids. Above all this, however, was the hope that I should be restored to my comrades the next day.

Early the next morning I rose unrefreshed, and pursued my weary way over the prostrate trunks. It was noon when I reached the spot where my notices were posted. No one had been there. My disappointment was almost overwhelming. For the first time, I realized that I was lost. Then came a crushing sense of destitution. No food, no fire; no means to procure either; alone in an unexplored wilderness, one hundred and fifty miles from the nearest human abode, surrounded by wild beasts, and famishing with hunger. It was no time for despondency. A moment afterwards I felt how calamity can elevate the mind, in the formation of the resolution "not to perish in that wilderness."

The hope of finding the party still controlled my plans. I thought by traversing the peninsula centrally. I would be enabled to strike the shore of the

lake in advance of their camp, and near the point of departure for the Madison. Acting upon this impression, I rose from a sleepless couch, and pursued my way through the timber-entangled forest. A feeling of weakness took the place of hunger. Conscious of the need of food, I felt no cravings. Occasionally, while scrambling over logs and through thickets, a sense of faintness and exhaustion would come over me, but I would suppress it with the audible expression, "This won't do; I *must* find my company." Despondency would sometimes strive with resolution for the mastery of my thoughts. I would think of my home—of my daughter—and of the possible chance of starvation, or death in some more terrible form; but as often as these gloomy forebodings came, I would strive to banish them with reflections better adapted to my immediate necessities. I recollect at this time discussing the question, whether there was not implanted by Providence in every man a principle of self-preservation equal to any emergency which did not destroy his reason. I decided this question affirmatively a thousand times afterwards in my wanderings, and I record this experience here, that any person who reads it, should he ever

find himself in like circumstances, may not despair. There is life in the thought. It will revive hope, allay hunger, renew energy, encourage perseverance, and, as I have proved in my own case, bring a man out of difficulty, when nothing else can avail.

It was mid-day when I emerged from the forest into an open space at the foot of the peninsula. A broad lake of beautiful curvature, with magnificent surroundings, lay before me, glittering in the sunbeams. It was full twelve miles in circumference. A wide belt of sand formed the margin which I was approaching, directly opposite to which, rising seemingly from the very depths of the water, towered the loftiest peak of a range of mountains apparently interminable. The ascending vapor from innumerable hot springs, and the sparkling jet of a single geyser, added the feature of novelty to one of the grandest landscapes I ever beheld. Nor was the life of the scene less noticeable than its other attractions. Large flocks of swans and other water-fowl were sporting on the quiet surface of the lake; otters in great numbers performed the most amusing aquatic evolutions; mink and beaver swam around unscared, in most grotesque confusion. Deer, elk, and mountain sheep stared at me

manifesting more surprise than fear at my presence among them. The adjacent forest was vocal with the songs of birds, chief of which were the chattering notes of a species of mocking-bird, whose imitative efforts afforded abundant merriment. Seen under favorable circumstances, this assemblage of grandeur, beauty, and novelty would have been transporting; but, jaded with travel, famishing with hunger, and distressed with anxiety, I was in no humor for ecstasy. My tastes were subdued and chastened by the perils which environed me. I longed for food, friends, and protection. Associated with my thoughts, however, was the wish that some of my friends of peculiar tastes, could enjoy this display of secluded magnificence, now, probably, for the first time beheld by mortal eyes.

The lake was at least one thousand feet lower than the highest point of the peninsula, and several hundred feet below the level of Yellowstone Lake. I recognized the mountain which overshadowed it as the landmark which, a few days before, had received from Gen. Washburn the name of Mount Everts; and as it is associated with some of the most agreeable and terrible incidents of my exile, I feel that I have more than a mere discoverer's

right to the perpetuity of that christening. The lake is fed by innumerable small streams from the mountains, and the countless hot springs surrounding it. A large river flows from it, through a cañon a thousand feet in height, in a southeasterly direction, to a distant range of mountains, which I conjectured to be Snake River; and with the belief that I had discovered the source of the great southern tributary of the Columbia, I gave it the name of Bessie Lake, after the

“Sole daughter of my house and heart.”

During the first two days, the fear of meeting with Indians gave me considerable anxiety; but, when conscious of being lost, there was nothing I so much desired as to fall in with a lodge of Bannacks or Crows. Having nothing to tempt their cupidity, they would do me no personal harm, and, with the promise of reward, would probably minister to my wants and aid my deliverance. Imagine my delight, while gazing upon the animated expanse of water, at seeing sail out from a distant point a large canoe containing a single oarsman. It was rapidly approaching the shore where I was seated. With hurried steps I paced the beach to meet it, all my energies stimulated by the assurance it gave of food,

safety, and restoration to friends. As I drew near it turned towards the shore, and oh! bitter disappointment, the object which my eager fancy had transformed into an angel of relief stalked from the water, an enormous pelican, flapped its dragon-wings as if in mockery of my sorrow, and flew to a solitary point farther up the lake. This little incident quite unmanned me. The transition from joy to grief brought with it a terrible consciousness of the horrors of my condition. But night was fast approaching and darkness would come with it. While looking for a spot where I might repose in safety, my attention was attracted to a small green plant of so lively a hue as to form a striking contrast with the deep pine foliage. For closer examination I pulled it up by the root, which was long and tapering, not unlike a radish. It was a thistle. I tasted it; it was palatable and nutritious. My appetite craved it, and the first meal in four days was made on thistle-roots. Eureka! I had found food. No optical illusion deceived me this time; I could subsist until I rejoined my companions. Glorious counterpoise to the wretchedness of the preceding half-hour!

Overjoyed at this discovery, with hunger allayed,

I stretched myself under a tree, upon the foliage which had partially filled a space between contiguous trunks, and fell asleep. How long I slept I know not; but suddenly I was roused by a loud, shrill scream, like that of a human being in distress, poured, seemingly, into the very portals of my ear. There was no mistaking that fearful voice. I had been deceived by and answered it a dozen times while threading the forest, with the belief that it was a friendly signal. It was the screech of a mountain lion, so alarmingly near as to cause every nerve to thrill with terror. To yell in return, seize with convulsive grasp the limbs of the friendly tree, and swing myself into it, was the work of a moment. Scrambling hurriedly from limb to limb, I was soon as near the top as safety would permit. The savage beast was snuffing and growling below, apparently on the very spot I had just abandoned. I answered every growl with a responsive scream. Terrified at the delay and pawing of the beast, I increased my voice to its utmost volume, broke branches from the limbs, and, in the impotency of fright, madly hurled them at the spot whence the continued howlings proceeded.

Failing to alarm the animal, which now began to

make the circuit of the tree, as if to select a spot for springing into it, I shook, with a strength increased by terror, the slender trunk until every limb rustled with the motion. All in vain. The terrible creature pursued his walk around the tree, lashing the ground with his tail, and prolonging his howlings almost to a roar. It was too dark to see, but the movements of the lion kept me apprised of its position. Whenever I heard it on one side of the tree I speedily changed to the opposite—an exercise which, in my weakened state, I could only have performed under the impulse of terror. I would alternately sweat and thrill with horror at the thought of being torn to pieces and devoured by this formidable monster. All my attempts to frighten it seemed unavailing. Disheartened at its persistency, and expecting every moment it would take the deadly leap, I tried to collect my thoughts, and prepare for the fatal encounter which I knew must result. Just at this moment it occurred to me that I would try silence. Claspings the trunk of the tree with both arms, I sat perfectly still. The lion, at this time ranging round, occasionally snuffing and pausing, and all the while filling the forest with the echo of his howlings, suddenly imitated

my example. This silence was more terrible, if possible, than the clatter and crash of his movements through the brush-wood, for now I did not know from what direction to expect his attack. Moments passed with me like hours. After a lapse of time which I cannot estimate, the beast gave a spring into the thicket and ran screaming into the forest. My deliverance was effected.

Had strength permitted, I should have retained my perch till daylight, but with the consciousness of escape from the jaws of the ferocious brute came a sense of overpowering weakness which almost palsied me, and made my descent from the tree both difficult and dangerous. Incredible as it may seem, I lay down in my old bed, and was soon lost in a slumber so profound that I did not awake until after daylight. The experience of the night seemed like a terrible dream; but the broken limbs which in the agony of consternation I had thrown from the tree, and the rifts made in the fallen foliage by my visitant in his circumambulations, were too convincing evidences of its reality. I could not dwell upon my exposure and escape without shuddering, and reflecting that probably like perils would often occur under less fortunate circum-

stances, and with a more fatal issue. I wondered what fate was in reserve for me—whether I would ultimately sink from exhaustion and perish of starvation, or become the prey of some of the ferocious animals that roamed these vast fastnesses. My thoughts then turned to the loved ones at home. They could never know my fate, and would indulge a thousand conjectures concerning it, not the least distressing of which would be that I had been captured by a band of hostile Sioux, and tortured to death at the stake.

I was roused from this train of reflections by a marked change in the atmosphere. One of those dreary storms of mingled snow and rain, common to these high latitudes, set in. My clothing, which had been much torn, exposed my person to its “pitiless peltings.” An easterly wind, rising to a gale, admonished me that it would be furious and of long duration. None of the discouragements I had met with dissipated the hope of rejoining my friends; but foreseeing the delay, now unavoidable, I knew that my escape from the wilderness must be accomplished, if at all, by my own unaided exertions. This thought was terribly afflicting, and brought before me, in vivid array, all the

dreadful realities of my condition. I could see no ray of hope. In this condition of mind I could find no better shelter than the spreading branches of a spruce tree, under which, covered with earth and boughs, I lay during the two succeeding days; the storm, meanwhile, raging with unabated violence. While thus exposed, and suffering from cold and hunger, a little benumbed bird, not larger than a snow-bird, hopped within my reach. I instantly seized and killed it, and, plucking its feathers, ate it raw. It was a delicious meal for a half-starved man.

Taking advantage of a lull in the elements, on the morning of the third day I rose early and started in the direction of a large group of hot springs which were steaming under the shadow of Mount Everts. The distance I traveled could not have been less than ten miles. Long before I reached the wonderful cluster of natural cauldrons, the storm had recommenced. Chilled through, with my clothing thoroughly saturated, I lay down under a tree upon the heated incrustation until completely warmed. My heels and the sides of my feet were frozen. As soon as the warmth had permeated my system, and I had quieted my appetite

with a few thistle-roots, I took a survey of my surroundings, and selected a spot between two springs sufficiently asunder to afford heat at my head and feet. On this spot I built a bower of pine branches, spread its incrustated surface with fallen foliage and small boughs, and stowed myself away to await the close of the storm. Thistles were abundant, and I had fed upon them long enough to realize that they would, for a while at least, sustain life. In convenient proximity to my abode was a small, round, boiling spring, which I called my dinner-pot, and in which, from time to time, I cooked my roots.

This establishment, the best I could improvise with the means at hand, I occupied seven days—the first three of which were darkened by one of the most furious storms I ever saw. The vapor which supplied me with warmth saturated my clothing with its condensations. I was enveloped in a perpetual steam-bath. At first this was barely preferable to the storm, but I soon became accustomed to it, and before I left, though thoroughly parboiled, actually enjoyed it.

I had little else to do during my imprisonment but cook, think, and sleep. Of the variety and

strangeness of my reflections it is impossible to give the faintest conception. Much of my time was given to devising means of escape. I recollected to have read, at the time of their publication, the narratives of Lieutenant Strain and Doctor Kane, and derived courage and hope from the reflection that they struggled with and survived perils not unlike those which environed me. The chilling thought would then occur, that they were not alone. They had companions in suffering and sympathy. Each could bear his share of the burden of misery which it fell to my lot to bear alone, and make it lighter from the encouragement of mutual counsel and aid in a cause of common suffering. Selfish as the thought may seem, there was nothing I so much desired as a companion in misfortune. How greatly it would alleviate my distress! What a relief it would be to compare my wretchedness with that of a brother sufferer, and with him devise expedients for every exigency as it occurred! I confess to the weakness, if it be one, of having squandered much pity upon myself during the time I had little else to do.

Nothing gave me more concern than the want of fire. I recalled everything I had ever read or

heard of the means by which fire could be produced; but none of them were within my reach. An escape without it was simply impossible. It was indispensable as a protection against night attacks of wild beasts. Exposure to another storm like the one just over would destroy my life, as this one would have done, but for the warmth derived from the springs. As I lay in my bower anxiously awaiting the disappearance of the snow, which had fallen to a depth of a foot or more, and impressed with the belief that for want of fire I should be obliged to remain among the springs, it occurred to me that I would erect some sort of monument, which might, at some future day, inform a casual visitor of the circumstances under which I had perished. A gleam of sunshine lit up the bosom of the lake, and with it the thought flashed upon my mind that I could, with a lens from my opera-glasses, get fire from Heaven. Oh, happy, life-renewing thought! Instantly subjecting it to the test of experiment, when I saw the smoke curl from the bit of dry wood in my fingers, I felt, if the whole world were offered me for it, I would cast it all aside before parting with that little spark. I was now the happy possessor of food and fire.

These would carry me through. All thoughts of failure were instantly abandoned. Though the food was barely adequate to my necessities—a fact too painfully attested by my attenuated body—I had forgotten the cravings of hunger, and had the means of producing fire. I said to myself, “I will not despair.”

My stay at the springs was prolonged several days by an accident that befell me on the third night after my arrival there. An unlucky movement while asleep broke the crust on which I reposed, and the hot steam, pouring upon my hip, scalded it severely before I could escape. This new affliction, added to my frost-bitten feet, already festering, was the cause of frequent delay and unceasing pain through all my wanderings. After obtaining fire, I set to work making preparations for as early departure as my condition would permit. I had lost both knives since parting from the company, but I now made a convenient substitute by sharpening the tongue of a buckle which I cut from my vest. With this I cut the legs and counters from my boots, making of them a passable pair of slippers, which I fastened to my feet as firmly as I could with strips of bark. With the ravelings

of a linen handkerchief, aided by the magic buckle-tongue, I mended my clothing. Of the same material I made a fish-line, which, on finding a piece of red tape in one of my pockets better suited to the purpose, I abandoned as a "bad job." I made of a pin that I found in my coat a fish-hook, and, by sewing up the bottoms of my boot-legs, constructed a very good pair of pouches to carry my food in, fastening them to my belt by the straps.

Thus accoutered, on the morning of the eighth day after my arrival at the springs I bade them a final farewell, and started on my course directly across that portion of the neck of the peninsula between me and the south-east arm of Yellowstone Lake. It was a beautiful morning. The sun shone bright and warm, and there was a freshness in the atmosphere truly exhilarating. As I wandered musingly along, the consciousness of being alone, and of having surrendered all hope of finding my friends, returned upon me with crushing power. I felt, too, that those friends, by the necessities of their condition, had been compelled to abandon all efforts for my recovery. The thought was full of bitterness and sorrow. I tried to realize

what their conjectures were concerning my disappearance; but could derive no consolation from the long and dismal train of circumstances they suggested. Weakened by a long fast, and the unsatisfying nature of the only food I could procure, I know that from this time onward to the day of my rescue, my mind, though unimpaired in those perceptions needful to self-preservation, was in a condition to receive impressions akin to insanity. I was constantly traveling in dream-land, and indulging in strange reveries such as I had never before known. I seemed to possess a sort of duality of being, which, while constantly reminding me of the necessities of my condition, fed my imagination with vagaries of the most extravagant character. Nevertheless, I was perfectly conscious of the tendency of these morbid influences, and often tried to shake them off, but they would ever return with increased force, and I finally reasoned myself into the belief that their indulgence, as it afforded me pleasure, could work no harm while it did not interfere with my plans for deliverance. Thus I lived in a world of ideal happiness, and in a world of positive suffering at the same time.

A change in the wind and an overcast sky, ac-

accompanied by cold, brought with them a need of warmth. I drew out my lens and touchwood, but alas! there was no sun. I sat down on a log to await his friendly appearance. Hours passed; he did not come. Night, cold, freezing night, set in, and found me exposed to all its terrors. A bleak hillside sparsely covered with pines afforded poor accommodations for a half-clad, famishing man. I could only keep from freezing by the most active exertion in walking, rubbing, and striking my benumbed feet and hands against the logs. It seemed the longest, most terrible night of my life, and glad was I when the approaching dawn enabled me to commence retracing my steps to Bessie Lake. I arrived there at noon, built my first fire on the beach, and remained by it, recuperating, for the succeeding two days.

The faint hope that my friends might be delayed by their search for me until I could rejoin them now forsook me altogether. I made my arrangements independent of it. Either of three directions I might take would effect my escape, if life and strength held out. I drew upon the sand of the beach a map of these several courses with reference to my starting-point from the lake, and consider-

ed well the difficulties each would present. All were sufficiently defined to avoid mistake. One was to follow Snake River a distance of one hundred miles or more to Eagle Rock bridge; another, to cross the country between the southern shore of Yellowstone Lake and the Madison Mountains, by scaling which I could easily reach the settlements in the Madison Valley; and the other, to retrace my journey over the long and discouraging route by which I had entered the country. Of these routes the last-mentioned seemed the least inviting, probably because I had so recently traversed it, and was familiar with its difficulties. I had heard and read so much concerning the desolation and elemental upheavals and violent waters of the upper valley of the Snake, that I dared not attempt to return in that direction. The route by the Madison Range, encumbered by the single obstruction of the mountain barrier, was much the shortest, and so, most unwisely as will hereafter appear, I adopted it.

Filling my pouches with thistle-roots, I took a parting survey of the little solitude that had afforded me food and fire the preceding ten days, and with something of that melancholy feeling exper-

ienced by one who leaves his home to grapple with untried adventures, started for the nearest point on Yellowstone Lake. All that day I traveled over timber-heaps, amid tree-tops, and through thickets. At noon I took the precaution to obtain fire. With a brand which I kept alive by frequent blowing, and constant waving to and fro, at a late hour in the afternoon, faint and exhausted, I kindled a fire for the night on the only vacant spot I could find amid a dense wilderness of pines. The deep gloom of the forest, in the spectral light which revealed on all sides of me a compact and unending growth of trunks and an impervious canopy of somber foliage; the shrieking of night-birds; the supernaturally human scream of the mountain lion; the prolonged howl of the wolf, made me insensible to all other forms of suffering.

The burn on my hip was so inflamed that I could only sleep in a sitting posture. Seated with my back against a tree, the smoke from the fire almost enveloping me in its suffocating folds, I vainly tried, amid the din and uproar of this horrible serenade, to woo the drowsy god. My imagination was instinct with terror. At one moment it seemed as if, in the density of a thicket, I could see the

blazing eyes of a formidable monster fixed upon me, preparatory to a deadly leap; at another I fancied that I heard the swift approach of a pack of yelping wolves through the distant brushwood, which in a few moments would tear me limb from limb. Whenever, by fatigue and weakness, my terrors yielded to drowsiness, the least noise roused me to a sense of the hideousness of my condition. Once, in a fitful slumber, I fell forward into the fire, and inflicted a wretched burn on my hand. Oh! with what agony I longed for day!

A bright and glorious morning succeeded the dismal night, and brought with it the conviction that I had been the victim of uncontrollable nervous excitement. I resolved henceforth to banish it altogether; and, in much better spirits than I anticipated, resumed my journey towards the lake. Another day of unceasing toil among the tree-tops and thickets overtook me, near sunset, stand-upon a lofty headland jutting into the lake, and commanding a magnificent prospect of the mountains and valley over an immense area. In front of me, at a distance of fifty miles away, in the clear blue of the horizon, rose the arrowy peaks of the three Tetons. On the right, and apparently in close

proximity to the eminence I occupied, rolled the picturesque range of the Madison, scarred with clefts, ravines, gorges, and cañons, each of which glittered in the sunlight or deepened in shadow as the fitful rays of the descending luminary glanced along their varied rocky irregularities. Above where I stood were the lofty domes of Mounts Langford and Doane, marking the limits of that wonderful barrier which had so long defied human power in its efforts to subdue it. Rising seemingly from the promontory which favored my vision was the familiar summit of Mount Everts, at the base of which I had dwelt so long, and which still seemed to hold me within its friendly shadow. All the vast country within this grand enclosure of mountains and lake, scarred and seamed with the grotesque ridges, rocky escarpments, undulating hillocks, and miniature lakes, and steaming with hot springs, produced by the volcanic forces of a former era, lay spread out before me like a vast panorama.

I doubt if distress and suffering can ever entirely obliterate all sense of natural grandeur and magnificence. Lost in the wonder and admiration inspired by this vast world of beauties, I nearly for-

got to improve the few moments of remaining sunshine to obtain fire. With a lighted brand in my hand, I effected a most difficult and arduous descent of the abrupt and stony headland to the beach of the lake. The sand was soft and yielding. I kindled a fire, and removing the stiffened slippers from my feet, attached them to my belt, and wandered barefoot along the sandy shore to gather wood for the night. The dry, warm sand was most grateful to my lacerated and festering feet, and for a long time after my wood-pile was supplied, I sat with them uncovered. At length, conscious of the need of every possible protection from the freezing night atmosphere, I sought my belt for the slippers, and one was missing. In gathering the wood it had become detached, and was lost. Darkness was closing over the landscape, when, sorely disheartened with the thought of passing the night with one foot exposed to a freezing temperature, I commenced a search for the missing slipper. I knew I could not travel a day without it. Fearful that it had dropped into the lake, and been carried by some recurrent wave beyond recovery, my search for an hour among fallen trees and bushes, up the hill-side and along

the beach, in darkness and with flaming brands, at one moment crawling on hands and feet into a brush-heap, another peering among logs and bushes and stones, was filled with anxiety and dismay. Success at length rewarded my perseverance, and no language can describe the joy with which I drew the cause of so much distress from beneath the limb that, as I passed, had torn it from my belt. With a feeling of great relief, I now sat down in the sand, my back to a log, and listened to the dash and roar of the waves. It was a wild lullaby, but had no terrors for a worn-out man. I never passed a night of more refreshing sleep. When I awoke my fire was extinguished save a few embers, which I soon fanned into a cheerful flame. I ate breakfast with some relish, and started along the beach in pursuit of a camp, believing that if successful I should find directions what to do, and food to sustain me. The search which I was making lay in the direction of my pre-arranged route to the Madison Mountains, which I intended to approach at their lowest point of altitude.

Buoyed up by the hope of finding food and counsel, and another night of undisturbed repose in the sand, I resumed my journey along the shore,

and at noon found the camp last occupied by my friends on the lake. I struck their trail in the sand some time before I came to it. A thorough search for food in the ground and trees revealed nothing, and no notice to apprise me of their movements could be seen. A dinner-fork, which afterwards proved to be of infinite service in digging roots, and a yeast-powder can, which would hold half a pint, and which I converted into a drinking-cup and dinner-pot, were the only evidences that the spot had ever been visited by civilized man. "Oh!" thought I, "why did they forget to leave food!" it never occurring to me that they might have cached it, as I have since learned they did, in several spots nearer the place of my separation from them. I left the camp in deep dejection, with the purpose of following the trail of the party to the Madison. Carefully inspecting the faint traces left of their course of travel, I became satisfied that from some cause they had made a retrograde movement from this camp, and departed from the lake at a point farther down stream. Taking this as an indication that there were obstructions above, I commenced retracing my steps along the beach. An hour of sunshine in the afternoon enabled me to procure fire,

which, in the usual manner, I carried to my camping-place. There I built a fire, and to protect myself from the wind, which was blowing violently, lashing the lake into foam, I made a bower of pine boughs, crept under it, and very soon fell asleep. How long I slept I know not, but I was aroused by the snapping and cracking of the burning foliage, to find my shelter and the adjacent forest in a broad sheet of flame. My left hand was badly burned, and my hair singed closer than a barber would have trimmed it, while making my escape from the semicircle of burning trees. Among the disasters of this fire, there was none I felt more seriously than the loss of my buckle-tongue knife, my pin fish-hook, and tape fish-line.

The grandeur of the burning forest surpasses description. An immense sheet of flame, following to their tops the lofty trees of an almost impenetrable forest, leaping from top to top, and sending thousands of forked tongues a hundred feet or more athwart the midnight darkness, lighting up with lurid gloom and glare the surrounding lake and mountains, fills the beholder with mingled feelings of awe and astonishment. I never before saw anything so terribly beautiful. It was

marvelous to witness the flash-like rapidity with which the flames would mount the loftiest trees. The roaring, cracking, crashing, and snapping of falling limbs and burning foliage was deafening. On, on, on traveled the destructive element, until it seemed as if the whole forest was enveloped in flame. Afar up the wood-crowned hill, the overtopping trees shot forth pinnacles and walls and streamers of arrowy fire. The entire hill-side was an ocean of glowing and surging fiery billows. Favored by the gale, the conflagration spread with lightning swiftness over an illimitable extent of country, filling the atmosphere with driving clouds of suffocating fume, and leaving a broad and blackened trail of spectral trunks shorn of limbs and foliage, smoking and burning, to mark the immense sweep of its devastation.

Resolved to search for a trail no longer, when daylight came I selected for a landmark the lowest notch in the Madison Range. Carefully surveying the jagged and broken surface over which I must travel to reach it, I left the lake and pushed into the midst of its intricacies. All the day, until nearly sunset, I struggled over rugged hills, through windfalls, thickets, and matted forests,

with the rock-ribbed beacon constantly in view. As I advanced it receded, as if in mockery of my toil. Night overtook me with my journey half accomplished. The precaution of obtaining fire gave me warmth and sleep, and long before daylight I was on my way. The hope of finding an easy pass into the valley of the Madison inspired me with fresh courage and determination; but long before I arrived at the base of the range, I scanned hopelessly its insurmountable difficulties. It presented to my eager vision an endless succession of inaccessible peaks and precipices, rising thousands of feet sheer and bare above the plain. No friendly gorge or gully or cañon invited such an effort as I could make to scale this rocky barrier. Oh for the faith that could remove mountains! How soon should this colossal fabric open at my approach! What a feeling of helpless despair came over me with the conviction that the journey of the last two days had been in vain! I seated myself on a rock, upon the summit of a commanding hill, and cast my eyes along the only route which now seemed tenable—down the Yellowstone. How many dreary miles of forest and mountain filled the terrible panorama! I thought that before ac-

cepting this discouraging alternative I would spend a day in search for a pass. Twenty miles at most would take me into the Madison Valley, and thirty more restore me to friends who had abundance. Supposing that I should find plenty of thistles, I had left the lake with a small supply, and that was entirely spent. I looked in vain for them where I then was.

While I was thus considering whether to remain and search for a passage or return to the Yellowstone, I experienced one of those strange hallucinations which many of my friends have misnamed insanity, but which to me was Providence. An old clerical friend, for whose character and counsel I had always cherished peculiar regard, in some unaccountable manner seemed to be standing before me, charged with advice which would relieve my perplexity. I seemed to hear him say, as if in a voice and with the manner of authority:—

“Go back immediately, as rapidly as your strength will permit. There is no food here, and the idea of scaling these rocks is madness.”

“Doctor,” I rejoined, “the distance is too great. I cannot live to travel it.”

“Say not so. Your life depends upon the effort.

Return at once. Start now, lest your resolution falter. Travel as fast and as far as possible—it is your only chance.”

“Doctor, I am rejoiced to meet you in this hour of distress, but doubt the wisdom of your counsel. I am within seventy miles of Virginia. Just over these rocks, a few miles away, I shall find friends. My shoes are nearly worn out, my clothes are in tatters, and my strength is almost overcome. As a last trial, it seems to me I can but attempt to scale this mountain or perish in the effort, if God so wills.”

“Don’t think of it. Your power of endurance will carry you through. I will accompany you. Put your trust in Heaven. Help yourself and God will help you.”

Overcome by these and other persuasions, and delighted with the idea of having a traveling companion, I plodded my way over the route I had come, intending at a certain point to change it so as to strike the river at the foot of the lake. Stopping after a few miles of travel, I had no difficulty in obtaining fire, and passed a comfortable night. When I resumed my journey the next day the sun was just rising. Whenever I was disposed, as was

often the case, to question the wisdom of the change of routes, my old friend appeared to be near with words of encouragement, but his reticence on other subjects both surprised and annoyed me. I was impressed at times, during the entire journey, with the belief that my return was a fatal error, and if my deliverance had failed should have perished with that conviction. Early this day I deflected from my old route and took my course for the foot of the lake, with the hope, by constant travel, to reach it the next day. The distance was greater than I anticipated. Nothing is more deceptive than distance in these high latitudes. At the close of each of the two succeeding days, my point of destination was seemingly as far from me as at the moment I took leave of the Madison Range, and when, cold and hungry, on the afternoon of the fourth day, I gathered the first food I had eaten in nearly five days, and lay down by my fire near the debouchure of the river, I had nearly abandoned all hope of escape.

At day-break I was on the trail down the river. The thought I had adopted from the first, "I will not perish in this wilderness," often revived my sinking spirits, when, from faintness and exhaus-

tion, I felt but little desire for life. Once, while struggling through a field of tangled trunks which seemed interminable, at one of the pauses I found myself seriously considering whether it was not preferable to die there than renew the effort to proceed. I felt that all attempt to escape was but a bitter prolongation of the agony of dissolution. A seeming whisper in the air, "While there is life there is hope; take courage," broke the delusion, and I clambered on. I did not forget to improve the mid-day sun to procure fire. Sparks from the lighted brands had burned my hands and crisped the nails of my fingers, and the smoke from them had tanned my face to the complexion of an Indian. While passing through an opening in the forest I found the tip of a gull's wing; it was fresh. I made a fire upon the spot, mashed the bones with a stone, and consigning them to my camp kettle, the yeast-powder box, made a half pint of delicious broth. The remainder of that day and the night ensuing were given to sleep.

I lost all sense of time. Days and nights came and went, and were numbered only by the growing consciousness that I was gradually starving. I felt no hunger, did not eat to appease appetite, but to

renew strength. I experienced but little pain. The gaping sores on my feet, the severe burn on my hip, the festering crevices at the joints of my fingers, all terrible in appearance, had ceased to give me the least concern. The roots which supplied my food had suspended the digestive power of the stomach, and their fibres were packed in it in a matted, compact mass.

Not so with my hours of slumber. They were visited by the most luxurious dreams. I would apparently visit the most gorgeously decorated restaurants of New York and Washington; sit down to immense tables spread with the most appetizing viands; partake of the richest oyster stews and plumpest pies; engage myself in the labor and preparation of curious dishes, and with them fill range upon range of elegantly furnished tables until they fairly groaned beneath the accumulated dainties prepared by my own hands. Frequently the entire night would seem to have been spent in getting up a sumptuous dinner. I would realize the fatigue of roasting, boiling, baking, and fabricating the choicest dishes known to the modern *cuisine*, and in my disturbed slumbers would enjoy with epicurean relish the food thus furnished even to re-

pletion. Alas! there was more luxury than life in these somnolent vagaries.

It was a cold, gloomy day when I arrived in the vicinity of the falls. The sky was overcast and the snow-capped peaks rose chilly and bleak through the biting atmosphere. The moaning of the wind through the pines, mingling with the sullen roar of the falls, was strangely in unison with my own saddened feelings. I had no heart to gaze upon a scene which a few weeks before had inspired me with rapture and awe. One moment of sunshine was of more value to me than all the marvels amid which I was famishing. But the sun had hid his face and denied me all hope of obtaining fire. The only alternative was to seek shelter in a thicket. I penetrated the forest a long distance before finding one that suited me. Breaking and crowding my way into its very midst, I cleared a spot large enough to recline upon, interlaced the surrounding brushwood, gathered the fallen foliage into a bed, and lay down with a prayer for sleep and forgetfulness. Alas! neither came. The coldness increased through the night. Constant friction with my hands and unceasing beating with my legs and feet saved me from freezing. It was the most ter-

rible night of my journey, and when, with the early dawn, I pulled myself into a standing posture, it was to realize that my right arm was partially paralyzed, and my limbs so stiffened with cold as to be almost immovable. Fearing lest paralysis should suddenly seize upon the entire system, I literally dragged myself through the forest to the river. Seated near the verge of the great cañon below the falls, I anxiously awaited the appearance of the sun. That great luminary never looked so beautiful as when, a few moments afterwards, he emerged from the clouds and exposed his glowing beams to the concentrated powers of my lens. I kindled a mighty flame, fed it with every dry stick and broken tree-top I could find, and without motion, and almost without sense, remained beside it several hours. The great falls of the Yellowstone were roaring within three hundred yards, and the awful cañon yawned almost at my feet; but they had lost all charm for me. In fact, I regarded them as enemies which had lured me to destruction, and felt a sullen satisfaction in morbid indifference.

My old friend and adviser, whose presence I had felt more than seen the last few days, now forsook

me altogether. But I was not alone. By some process which I was too weak to solve, my arms, legs, and stomach were transformed into so many traveling companions. Often for hours I would plod along conversing with these imaginary friends. Each had his peculiar wants which he expected me to supply. The stomach was importunate in his demand for a change of diet—complained incessantly of the roots I fed him, their present effect and more remote consequences. I would try to silence him with promises, beg of him to wait a few days, and when this failed of the quiet I desired, I would seek to intimidate him by declaring, as a sure result of negligence, our inability to reach home alive. All to no purpose—he tormented me with his fretful humors through the entire journey. The others would generally concur with him in these fancied altercations. The legs implored me for rest, and the arms complained that I gave them too much to do. Troublesome as they were, it was a pleasure to realize their presence. I worked for them, too, with right good will, doing many things for their seeming comfort which, had I felt myself alone, would have remained undone. They appeared to be perfectly helpless of themselves;

would do nothing for me or for each other. I often wondered, while they ate and slept so much, that they did not aid in gathering wood and kindling fires. As a counterpoise to their own inertia, whenever they discovered languor in me on necessary occasions, they were not wanting in words of encouragement and cheer. I recall as I write an instance where, by prompt and timely interposition, the representative of the stomach saved me from a death of dreadful agony. One day I came to a small stream issuing from a spring of mild temperature on the hill-side, swarming with minnows. I caught some with my hands and ate them raw. To my taste they were delicious. But the stomach refused them, accused me of attempting to poison him, and would not be reconciled until I had emptied my pouch of the few fish I had put there for future use. Those that I ate made me very sick. Poisoned by the mineral in the water, had I glutted my appetite with them as I intended, I should doubtless have died in the wilderness, in excruciating torment.

A gradual mental introversion grew upon me as physical weakness increased. The grand and massive scenery which, on the upward journey, had

aroused every enthusiastic impulse of my nature, was now tame and spiritless. My thoughts were turned in upon myself—upon the dreadful fate which apparently lay just before me—and the possible happiness of the existence beyond. All doubt of immortality fled in the light of present realities. So vivid were my conceptions of the future that at times I longed for death, not less as the beginning of happiness than as a release from misery. Led on by these reflections, I would recall the varied incidents of my journey—my escape from the lion, from fire, my return from the Madison Range—and in all of them I saw how much I had been indebted to that mysterious protection which comes only from the throne of the Eternal. And yet, starving, foot-sore, half blind, worn to a skeleton, was it surprising that I lacked the faith needful to buoy me above the dark waters of despair, which I now felt were closing around me?

In less serious moods, as I struggled along, my thoughts would revert to the single being on whom my holiest affections centered—my daughter. What a tie was that to bind me to life! Oh! could I be restored to her for a single hour, long enough for parting counsel and blessing, it would

be joy unspeakable! Long hours of painful travel were relieved of physical suffering by this absorbing agony of the mind, which, when from my present stand-point I contrast it with the personal calamities of my exile, swells into mountains.

To return from this digression. At many of the streams on my route I spent hours in endeavoring to catch trout, with a hook fashioned from the rim of my broken spectacles, but in no instance with success. The tackle was defective. The country was full of game in great variety. I saw large herds of deer, elk, antelope, occasionally a bear, and many smaller animals. Numerous flocks of ducks, geese, swans, and pelicans inhabited the lakes and rivers. But with no means of killing them, their presence was a perpetual aggravation. At all the camps of our company I stopped and recalled many pleasant incidents associated with them.

One afternoon, when approaching 'Tower Falls,' I came upon a large hollow tree, which, from the numerous tracks surrounding it, and the matted foliage in the cavity, I recognized as the den of a bear. It was a most inviting couch. Gathering a needful supply of wood and brush, I lighted a cir-

cle of piles around the tree, crawled into the nest, and passed a night of unbroken slumber. I rose the next morning to find that during the night the fires had communicated with the adjacent forest, and burned a large space in all directions, doubtless intimidating the rightful proprietor of the nest, and saving me from another midnight adventure.

At 'Tower Falls' I spent the first half of a day in capturing a grasshopper, and the remainder in a fruitless effort to catch a mess of trout. In the agony of disappointment, I resolved to fish no more. A spirit of rebellion seized me. I determined that thistles should thenceforth be my only sustenance. "Why is it," I asked of myself, "that in the midst of abundance, every hour meeting with objects which would restore strength and vigor and energy, every moment contriving some device to procure the nourishment my wasting frame requires, I should meet with these repeated and discouraging failures?" Thoughts of the early teachings of a pious mother suppressed these feelings. Oh! how often have the recollections of a loved New England home, and the memories of a happy childhood, cheered my sinking spirits, and dis-

sipated the gathering gloom of despair! There were thoughts and feelings and mental anguishes without number, that visited me during my period of trial, that never can be known to any but my God and myself. Bitter as was my experience, it was not unrelieved by some of the most precious moments I have ever known.

Soon after leaving 'Tower Falls,' I entered the open country. Pine forests and windfalls were changed for sage brush and desolation, with occasional tracts of stunted verdure, exhibiting here and there an isolated clump of dwarf trees, and ravines filled with the rocky *debris* of adjacent mountains. My first camp on this part of the route, for the convenience of getting wood, was made near the summit of a range of towering foot-hills. Towards morning a storm of wind and snow nearly extinguished my fire. I became very cold; the storm was still raging when I arose, and the ground white with snow. I was perfectly bewildered, and had lost my course of travel. No visible object, seen through the almost blinding storm, reassured me, and there was no alternative but to find the river and take my direction from its current. Fortunately, after a few hours of stumbling

and scrambling among rocks and over crests, I came to the precipitous side of the cañon through which it ran, and with much labor, both of hands and feet, descended it to the margin. I drank copiously of its pure waters, and sat beside it for a long time, waiting for the storm to abate, so that I could procure fire. The day wore on, without any prospect of a termination to the storm. Chilled through, my tattered clothing saturated, I saw before me a night of horrors unless I returned to my fire. The scramble up the side of the rocky cañon, in many places nearly perpendicular, was the hardest work of my journey. Often while clinging to the jutting rocks with hands and feet, to reach a shelving projection, my grasp would uncloze and I would slide many feet down the sharp declivity. It was night when, sore from the bruises I had received, I reached my fire; the storm, still raging, had nearly extinguished it. I found a few embers in the ashes, and with much difficulty kindled a flame. Here, on this bleak mountain side, as well as I now remember, I must have passed two nights beside the fire, in the storm. Many times during each night I crawled to the little clump of trees to gather wood, and brush, and the broken limbs of

fallen tree-tops. All the sleep I obtained was snatched from the intervals which divided these labors. It was so harassed with frightful dreams as to afford little rest. I remember, before I left this camp, stripping up my sleeves to look at my shrunken arms. Flesh and blood had apparently left them. The skin clung to the bones like wet parchment. A child's hand could have clasped them from wrist to shoulder. "Yet," thought I, "it is death to remain; I cannot perish in this wilderness."

Taking counsel of this early formed resolution, I hobbled on my course through the snow, which was rapidly disappearing before the rays of the warm sun. Well knowing that I should find no thistles in the open country, I had filled my pouches with them before leaving the forest. My supply was running low, and there were yet several days of heavy mountain travel between me and Boteler's ranch. With the most careful economy, it could last but two or three days longer. I saw the necessity of placing myself and imaginary companions upon allowance. The conflict which ensued with the stomach, when I announced this resolution, required great firmness to carry through.

I tried wheedling and coaxing and promising; failing in these, I threatened to part company with a comrade so unreasonable, and he made no further complaint.

Two or three days before I was found, while ascending a steep hill, I fell from exhaustion into the sage brush, without the power to rise. Unbuckling my belt, as was my custom, I soon fell asleep. I have no idea of the time I slept, but upon awaking I fastened my belt, scrambled to my feet, and pursued my journey. As night drew on I selected a camping-place, gathered wood into a heap, and felt for my lens to procure fire. It was gone. If the earth had yawned to swallow me I would not have been more terrified. The only chance for life was lost. The last hope had fled. I seemed to feel the grim messenger who had been so long pursuing me knocking at the portals of my heart as I lay down by the side of the woodpile, and covered myself with limbs and sage brush, with the dreadful conviction that my struggle for life was over, and that I should rise no more. The floodgates of misery seemed now to be opened, and it rushed in living tide upon my soul. With the rapidity of lightning, I ran over every

event of my life. Thoughts doubled and trebled upon me, until I saw, as if in vision, the entire past of my existence. It was all before me, as if painted with a sunbeam, and all seemingly faded like the phantoms of a vivid dream.

As calmness returned, reason resumed her empire. Fortunately, the weather was comfortable. I summoned all the powers of my memory, thought over every foot of the day's travel, and concluded that the glass must have become detached from my belt while sleeping. Five long miles over the hills must be retraced to regain it. There was no alternative, and before daylight I had staggered over half the distance. I found the lens on the spot where I had slept. No incident of my journey brought with it more of joy and relief.

Returning to the camp of the previous night, I lighted the pile I had prepared, and lay down for a night of rest. It was very cold, and towards morning commenced snowing. With difficulty I kept the fire alive. Sleep was impossible. When daylight came, I was impressed with the idea that I must go on despite the storm. A flash—momentary but vivid—came over me, that I should be saved. Snatching a lighted brand, I started

through the storm. In the afternoon the storm abated and the sun shone at intervals. Coming to a small clump of trees, I set to work to prepare a camp. I laid the brand down which I had preserved with so much care, to pick up a few dry sticks with which to feed it, until I could collect wood for a camp-fire, and in the few minutes thus employed it expired. I sought to revive it, but every spark was gone. Clouds obscured the sun, now near the horizon, and the prospect of another night of exposure without fire became fearfully imminent. I sat down with my lens and the last remaining piece of touchwood I possessed to catch a gleam of sunshine, feeling that my life depended on it. In a few moments the cloud passed, and with trembling hands I presented the little disk to the face of the glowing luminary. Quivering with excitement lest a sudden cloud should interpose, a moment passed before I could hold the lens steadily enough to concentrate a burning focus. At length it came. The little thread of smoke curled gracefully upwards from the Heaven-lighted spark, which, a few moments afterwards, diffused with warmth and comfort my desolate lodgings.

I resumed my journey the next morning, with

the belief that I should make no more fires with my lens. I must save a brand, or perish. The day was raw and gusty; an east wind, charged with storm, penetrated my nerves with irritating keenness. After walking a few miles the storm came on, and a coldness unlike any other I had ever felt seized me. It entered all my bones. I attempted to build a fire, but could not make it burn. Seizing a brand, I stumbled blindly on, stopping within the shadow of every rock and clump to renew energy for a final conflict for life. A solemn conviction that death was near, that at each pause I made my limbs would refuse further service, and that I should sink helpless and dying in my path, overwhelmed me with terror. Amid all this tumult of the mind, I felt that I had done all that man could do. I knew that in two or three days more I could effect my deliverance, and I derived no little satisfaction from the thought that, as I was now in the broad trail, my remains would be found, and my friends relieved of doubt as to my fate. Once only the thought flashed across my mind that I should be saved, and I seemed to hear a whispered command to "Struggle on." Groping along the side of a hill, I became suddenly sensible of a sharp

reflection, as of burnished steel. Looking up, through half-closed eyes, two rough but kindly faces met my gaze.

“Are you Mr. Everts?”

“Yes. All that is left of him.”

“We have come for you.”

“Who sent you?”

“Judge Lawrence and other friends.”

“God bless him, and them, and you! I am saved!” and with these words, powerless of further effort, I fell forward into the arms of my preservers, in a state of unconsciousness. I was saved. On the very brink of the river which divides the known from the unknown, strong arms snatched me from the final plunge, and kind ministrations wooed me back to life.

Baronet and Prichette, my two preservers, by the usual appliances, soon restored me to consciousness, made a camp upon the spot, and while one went to Fort Ellis, a distance of seventy miles, to return with remedies to restore digestion and an ambulance to convey me to that post, the other sat by my side, and with all the care, sympathy, and solicitude of a brother, ministered to my frequent necessities. In two days I was sufficiently recover-

ed to be moved twenty miles down the trail to the cabin of some miners who were prospecting in that vicinity. From these men I received every possible attention which their humane and generous natures could devise. A good bed was provided, game was killed to make broth, and the best stores of their larder placed at my command. For four days, at a time when every day's labor was invaluable in their pursuit, they abandoned their work to aid in my restoration. Owing to the protracted inaction of the system, and the long period which must transpire before Prichette's return with remedies, my friends had serious doubts of my recovery.

The night after my arrival at the cabin, while suffering the most excruciating agony, and thinking that I had only been saved to die among friends, a loud knock was heard at the cabin door. An old man in mountain costume entered—a hunter, whose life was spent among the mountains. He was on his way to find a brother. He listened to the story of my sufferings, and the tears rapidly coursed each other down his rough, weather-beaten face. But when he was told of my present necessity, brightening in a moment, he exclaimed:

“Why, Lord bless you, if that is all, I have the very remedy you need. In two hours’ time all shall be well with you.”

He left the cabin, returning in a moment with a sack filled with the fat of a bear which he had killed a few hours before. From this he rendered out a pint measure of oil. I drank the whole of it. It proved to be the needed remedy, and the next day, freed from pain, with appetite and digestion re-established, I felt that good food and plenty of it were only necessary for an early recovery.

In a day or two I took leave of my kind friends, with a feeling of regret at parting, and of gratitude for their kindness as enduring as life. Meeting the carriage on my way, I proceeded to Boseman, where I remained among old friends, who gave me every attention until my health was sufficiently restored to allow me to return to my home at Helena.

My heartfelt thanks are due to the members of the Expedition, all of whom devoted seven, and some twelve days to the search for me before they left Yellowstone Lake; and to Judge Lawrence, of Helena, and the friends who co-operated with him in the offer of reward which sent Baronet and Prichette to my rescue.

My narrative is finished. In the course of events the time is not far distant when the wonders of the Yellowstone will be made accessible to all lovers of sublimity, grandeur, and novelty in natural scenery, and its majestic waters become the abode of civilization and refinement; and when that arrives, I hope, in happier mood and under more auspicious circumstances, to revisit scenes fraught for me with such thrilling interest; to ramble along the glowing beach of Bessie Lake; to sit down amid the hot springs under the shadow of Mount Everts; to thread unscared the mazy forests, retrace the dreary journey to the Madison Range, and with enraptured fancy gaze upon the mingled glories and terrors of the great falls and marvelous cañon, and to enjoy, in happy contrast with the trials they recall, their power to delight, elevate, and overwhelm the mind with wondrous and majestic beauty.

Three hundred and seventy-five copies of
Thirty-seven Days of Peril on hand-made
paper printed by Edwin & Robert Grabhorn
and James McDonald at San Francisco in
February 1923. Title page and decorations
by Joseph Sinel. This is copy No. 122







